AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-26. Cancelled.

Claim 27. (Previously Presented) The cell according to claim 49 or 51, wherein the host cell is *Escherichia coli*.

Claim 28. Cancelled.

Claim 29. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a peptide having a desired biological activity, comprising the steps of:

(1) culturing cells transformed with an expression vector having a nucleotide sequence encoding a fusion protein comprising a protective peptide and the peptide of interest having a helper peptide added thereto ~~that has a protective peptide added to the peptide of interest - helper peptide unit~~, and then harvesting said fusion protein from said culture, wherein the helper peptide has 5 to 50 amino acid residues and is designed so that the isoelectric point of the peptide of interest that has helper peptide added

thereto is between 8 and 12, and further wherein there are cleavage sites between the protective peptide, the helper peptide, and the peptide of interest so that the fusion protein formed by said peptides contains two cleavage sites;

(2) cleaving off from said fusion protein the peptide of interest that has a helper peptide added thereto and the protective peptide, and purifying the peptide of interest that has the helper peptide added thereto as desired;

(3) cleaving off from the peptide of interest that has the helper peptide added thereto obtained in step (2), the helper peptide and the peptide of interest; and

(4) purifying the peptide of interest obtained in step (3).

Claim 30. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein said protective peptide has 30 to 200 amino acid residues.

Claim 31. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein an ion exchange resin is used in the purification process.

Claim 32. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 31, wherein said ion exchange resin is a cation exchange resin.

Claim 33. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein a reverse phase chromatography or a hydrophobic chromatography is used in the purification process.

Claim 34. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein a surfactant and/or a salt are added in at least one of steps (1) to (4) to maintain the solubility of the peptide of interest.

Claim 35. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein the host cell is a prokaryotic cell or a eukaryotic cell.

Claim 36. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 35, wherein the host cell is *Escherichia coli*.

Claim 37. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein the peptide of interest is an amidated peptide.

Claim 38. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein the peptide of interest is a glucagon-like peptide-1 derivative having an insulinotropic activity.

Claim 39. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 derivative having an insulinotropic activity has an isoelectric point of 4.5 to 9.0.

Claim 40. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the glucagon-like peptide-1 derivative having an insulinotropic activity has an isoelectric point of 5.5 to 7.5.

Claims 41-44. Cancelled.

Claim 45. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the purity of the glucagon-like peptide-1 derivative obtained having an insulinotropic activity is 98% or greater.

Claim 46. Cancelled.

Claim 47. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein the peptide of interest obtained in step (2) is subjected to a modification reaction to obtain a modified peptide.

Claim 48. (Currently Amended) An expression vector comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a fusion protein comprising a protective peptide and the peptide of interest having a helper peptide added thereto ~~that has a protective peptide added to the peptide of interest - helper peptide unit~~, wherein the helper peptide has 5 to 50 amino acid residues and is designed so that the isoelectric point of the peptide of interest that has the helper peptide added thereto is between 8 and 12,

and further wherein there are cleavage sites between the protective peptide, the helper peptide, and the peptide of interest so that the fusion protein formed by said peptides contains two cleavage sites.

Claim 49. (Currently Amended) A prokaryotic or a eukaryotic cell transformed with an expression vector comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a fusion protein comprising a protective peptide and the peptide of interest having a helper peptide added thereto ~~that has a protective peptide added to the peptide of interest - helper peptide unit~~, wherein the helper peptide has 5 to 50 amino acid residues and is designed so that the isoelectric point of the peptide of interest that has the helper peptide added thereto is between 8 and 12, and further wherein there are cleavage sites between the protective peptide, the helper peptide, and the peptide of interest so that the fusion protein formed by said peptides contains two cleavage sites.

Claim 50. (Previously Presented) An expression vector according to claim 48, wherein the peptide of interest is a glucagon-like peptide-1 derivative.

Claim 51. (Previously Presented) A prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell according to claim 49, wherein the peptide of interest is a glucagon-like peptide-1 derivative.

Claim 52. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 29, wherein the fusion protein comprises a protective peptide-helper peptide-peptide of interest in this order from the N-terminal to the C-terminal.

Claim 53. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 47, wherein the modification reaction is an amidation.

Claim 54. (New) The process of claim 29, wherein the fusion protein comprises from the N-terminal to the C-terminal a protective peptide, a helper peptide and a peptide of interest.